

11  
Protestant Charity.

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A  
S E R M O N

Preached at  
S. SEPULCHRES Church,

On *Tuesday*

In Easter Week,

A. D. MDCLXXXI.

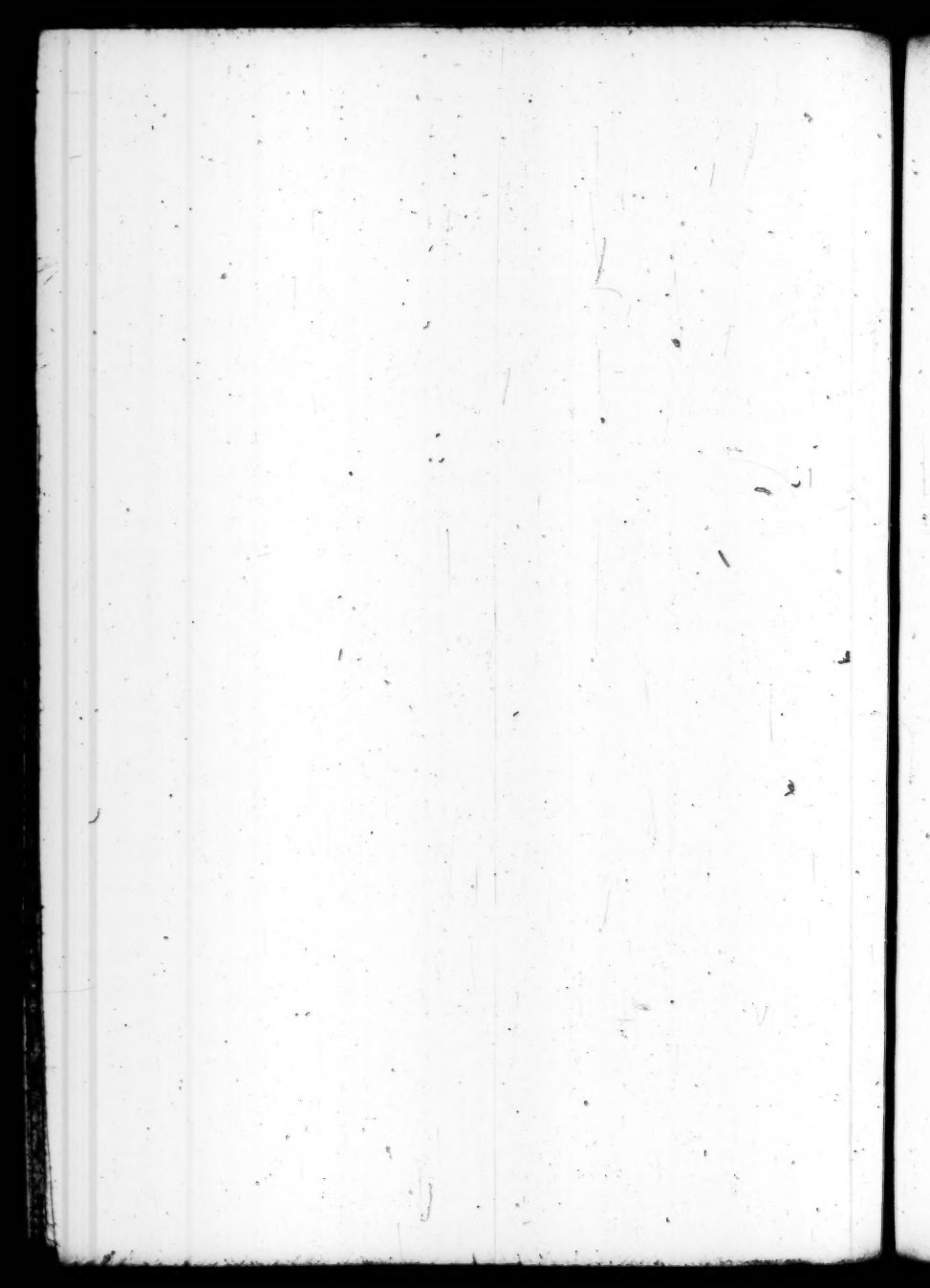
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By EDWARD STILLINGFLEET, D. D.  
Dean of S<sup>t</sup> Paul's, and Chaplain in Ordinary  
to His MAJESTY.

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L O N D O N:

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To the Right Honourable  
Sir *PATIENCE WARD*,  
**Lord Mayor**  
Of the City of  
**L O N D O N,**  
AND TO  
The Court of **ALDERMEN.**

My Lord and Gentlemen,

**I** *is the great Honour of this City,  
since the Protestant Religion was pro-  
fessed in it, that it hath born a much grea-  
ter proportion to the rest of the Nation, in  
publick Works of Charity, than in the  
largeness of its Buildings, and number of  
its Inhabitants. For when, upon the un-  
reasonable clamours of our Adversaries of  
the*

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*the Church of Rome, an account was thought fit to be taken of such Acts of Charity as lay more open to the view of the World, within sixty years from the settlement of the Reformation by Q. Elizabeth, it was found, that they exceeded all that had been done in twice that number of years in the time of Popery; and that therein this City did equal the whole Kingdom besides. And although those who make this Report, complain of the too great reservedness of some Companies in making known their Benefactors; yet upon the diligent search some persons made, it did appear, that as to the best parts of publick Charity in founding Schools and Hospitals, &c. more was done within that time, than from the Conquest to the Reformation.*

*For, besides the large and constant Charity of the City in the Care of their Hospitals; many particular Citizens did so great things in several parts of the Nation upon their own Stocks, that within that compass*



## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*compass of Time, more than forty Hospitals were built and endowed, and above twenty Free Schools, and upon a reasonable computation, near a million of Money was thought to be bestowed in Works of Charity, in London and the two Universities.*

*This was the true Protestant Charity of those times; which ran in a clear, free and undivided Channel, without the mixture of Superstition, or being diverted from its proper course to serve private ends and designs. And this brought Honour to our Religion; advanced the Reputation of the City; and promoted the Good of the whole Nation. And such are great and wise ends; fit to be considered and carried on by those to whom God hath given a heart suitable to the largeness of their Estates; which they can neither carry into another World, nor better employ in this than by doing Good to Mankind with them.*

*And as there still continued many and undeni-*

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*undeniable Instances among true Protestants of extraordinary designs of Charity by particular Members of this City, whom God had blessed in their Employments; so I have reason to hope, that this Age will afford remarkable Examples of the same kind to Posterity: That so our Protestant Faith may be always found fruitfull in good Works; which will be the best means both to adorn and preserve it.*

*To perswade and encourage others to tread in the steps of those worthy Citizens, whose Faith and Charity deserve their imitation, is the chief design of the following Sermon; which out of due Respect to the Order of your Court, I now present to your Hands; with my hearty Prayers to Almighty God for the continuance of his Blessing on this City and the Government of it. I am,*

My Lord and Gentlemen,

Your most faithfull and obedient Servant,

*E. Stillingfleet.*

## G A L A T. VI. 9.

*And let us not be weary in well-doing; for  
in due season we shall reap, if we faint  
not.*

**W**Hen *Julian* the Apostate designed (if *Sozom.*  
possible) to retrieve the honour of *l. 5. c. 15.*  
the Heathen Religion, he easily discern'd that  
it was not enough for him to restore the Priest-  
hood, to open the Temples, to appoint the *Hist. Trip.*  
Sacrifices to be offer'd upon the Altars; but *l. 6. c. 29.*  
he found it necessary for them to imitate the  
Christians in the strictness of their Lives, in  
the solemnity of their Devotions, in the exact-  
ness of their Discipline, and especially in the  
erecting Hospitals, and taking care of the Poor.  
For he that would not believe the Christian  
Religion to be from God, thought himself  
bound to give some probable account, how a  
Religion so contrary to the Interests and De-  
signs of this World, should be able to prevail  
against all the arts and power of its many and  
potent Enemies; and upon the deepest search  
which could be made by himself, or the grea-  
test

test Wits of the Heathens then about him, they concluded the flourishing and propagation of it to be chiefly owing to those things which he so much commended to the Heathens imitation. And from hence they inferred, that if the same things could be brought into Practice among the Gentiles, they should be able to supplant Christianity by its own methods, and restore Paganism by the same Weapons by which it was overthrown. This was thought so subtle and artificial a device by him whose great design was to extirpate our Religion in a soft and gentle manner, without the blood and cruelty of former times, that he writes an Epistle on purpose to *Arsacius* the chief Priest of *Galatia*, requiring punctual observance of these Commands; and as to the chargeable and expensive part, he offer'd large provisions out of his own Revenue to defray it.

But Saint *Paul* had been beforehand with him in *Galatia*, having planted Churches with great success there; and Christianity, by his means, took so deep root in mens hearts, that neither the rage and fury of former Persecutions, nor the plausible arts and insinuations of *Julian* were able to root it out. It is true, that these Churches, soon after their planting; were in great danger of being overrun by the pernicious Errours of some Seducers of that time;

time; (the apprehension whereof put Saint Paul into that astonishment which he expresseth in the beginning of this Epistle, *I marvel Gal. 1. 6. that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the Grace of Christ unto another Gospel, &c.*) yet by the early notice and care which he took to prevent the spreading of these corruptions among them, the Galatian Churches recover'd the soundness of their Faith, and have preserved a name among the Eastern Churches, though under great variety of conditions, to this day. Some take notice, that this is one of the sharpest *Epistles* written by Saint Paul. He appears indeed, by the beginning of it, to have been much surpris'd and moved at the news of a great and sudden alteration among them; which he was sure was not for the better. And by this plain dealing with them, he knew, till they consider'd better, they would be offended with him; but withall he tells them this did best become a *Servant of Christ*, who, like a good Physician, hath more regard to the Disease than to the Palate of his Patient; *For if I yet pleased Men, I should not be the Servant of Christ.* But having vindicated his own honour, which the evil reports of the false Apostles made necessary; and argued with great strength and conviction against the imposers of the Law; he

I. 10.

Ch. 1, 2.

Ch. 3, 4.  
part of 5.

betakes himself to the inforcing the practice of the general and necessary Duties of *Christianity* upon these *Galatians*. If they had such a

Gal. 5.14. mind to keep the Law, *All the Law*, saith he, *is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self.* It was a vain and foolish thing for them to contend about keeping the Law, who did overthrow the main design of it, by their heats and animosities against each other; which, instead of preserving the honour of the Law, was the certain way

15. to destroy one another. *But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.* From hence he shews, that

20. *hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,* are as much the *lusts of the flesh*

21. *as adultery, fornication, murther, drunkenness, revellings and such like;* and as destructive to mens Salvation; of the which, saith he, *I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which doe such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And they that are true

24. *Christians must crucifie the flesh with all these affections and lusts thereof;* such as vain-glory, love of contention, envying the reputation of

26. others. *Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.* But the Apostle did not think the design of the Law, or the obligation of Christianity was satisfied



satisfied with abstaining from doing injuries to others ; therefore he proceeds to tell them what exercise of tenderness, compassion and readiness to doe good to others were expected from them by the Law of Christ.

(1.) If a man, through the frailty of humane Nature, or the sudden surprize of a Temptation, be overtaken in a fault, do not, saith he, trample upon him, nor insult over him ; but endeavour *with the spirit of meekness* to recover him from his fall ; considering that we carry about us the same load of flesh, and are exposed to continual Temptations our  
Gal. 6. 1.  
selves.

(2.) If we see others groaning under the heavy burthen of their own infirmities, or the pressures and calamities of the world, do not add more weight to their afflictions ; but put your own shoulders under to bear a part with them, to make their burthen more easie to them ; for herein lies a great deal of that duty which Christ hath laid on all his Disciples.  
*Bear ye one anothers burthens and so fulfill the Law of Christ.*

6. 2.

(3.) If it be impossible for men to attend the service of your Souls and the affairs of this World together, never grudge nor repine at the exercise of your kindness and liberality towards your spiritual Teachers, v. 6. *Let him*  
that

6. 6.

*that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things.* Which instances being mention'd, the Apostle subjoins two things:

1. A general Proposition, *viz.* That every man shall receive in another World according to the good that he doth in this. *Be not deceived God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.* For he that soweth to his flesh shall of his flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. *i. e.* He that looks onely after his present advantage in this world and dares not venture to doe any thing out of hopes of recompence for it in another life, he is said to *sow to his flesh*; but he that is good and charitable and kind to others without hopes of any other advantage than what God will give him for it, is said to *sow to the spirit*; the *Flesh* and *Spirit* being opposed as the two Centres of the different worlds: the great thing to which all things tend in this world being something carnal or that relates to the *Flesh*; and the great principle of another world being wholly spiritual. And these two *Flesh* and *Spirit* are placed as two Loadstones drawing our hearts several ways, the one is much stronger, but at a greater distance; the other hath less force in it self but is much nearer to us, by which means



means it draws more powerfully the hearts that are already touched with a strong inclination to it. But the Apostle useth the similitude of two Fields, wherein the product of the Seed answers to the nature of the Soil ; *so he that sowes to the flesh, i. e.* that minds onely his present interest in this world, his harvest shall be proportionable to his seed, he may reap advantages to himself in this world suitable to his pains and industry ; but the utmost this world can yield is but of a short continuance, being of a temporary, transient, corruptible nature, *he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption* : but *he that soweth to the spirit, i. e.* hath so great a regard to the rewards of another life, that he is willing to let go a present enjoyment and bury it under ground, casting it in as seed into the earth in hopes of a future resurrection, however he may be condemned as a weak and improvident man by the men of this world, yet as certain as there is a life everlasting to come, so certainly shall all his good deeds yield an abundant increase and meet with a glorious recompence then, if there be no corrupt mixture in the sowing which may spoil the virtue of the seed, *for he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.* And let not men deceive themselves ; if they  
look

look onely at themselves and the things of this world, let their pretences be never so spiritual, if they dare not doe acts of Charity so as to trust God for a reward, they do but *sow to the flesh*; and though the world may be cheated, and men may sometimes deceive themselves, yet *God cannot be mocked*; he knows the hearts, and intentions, and secret designs of men, and according to them their reward shall be; *for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap*. This I take to be the natural and genuine meaning of the Apostle in those words.

2. A particular Exhortation, not to be discouraged *in well doing*, which is the same with *sowing to the spirit* before, and with *doing good* in the following verse, both which are to be understood of the Works of Charity; and therefore we ought to take it in that sense here. These are especially called *good Works* in the New Testament; *Dorcas* is said to be a  
 Act. 9.36. *Woman full of good Works and Alms-deeds which she did*. The Widow that was to be taken into Office in the Church, must be *well reported*  
 1 Tim. 5. *of for good Works*; and these presently follow,  
 10. *the bringing up children, the lodging strangers, washing the Saints feet and relieving the afflicted*; In the *Epistle to Titus*, Saint Paul gives him a  
 Tit. 3. 8. strict charge, that *he deliver it with great assurance* ( *δυσχεαίνοντες* ) *that they which believe in God*

God might be carefull to maintain good Works;  
*these things are good and profitable unto men*; Tit. 3. 14.  
 Where the same word is used in the Greek,  
 that is in the words of the Text. And to the  
 same purpose other words of a like significa-  
 tion are used, as *ἁγαπᾶν*, To doe good and to com- Heb. 13.  
*municate forget not*; *Ἀγαθοεργεῖν*, Charge them 16.  
*that are rich in this world ——— that they doe good*, 1 Tim. 6.  
*that they be rich in good works, ready to distri-* 18.  
*bute, willing to communicate. That ye may abound*  
*to every good Work, saith Saint Paul*; which he  
 after explains, by *being enriched in every thing* 2 Cor. 9.  
*to all bountifulness.* So that although *well doing* 8. 11.  
 in the general may extend to every good acti-  
 on, yet by the particular sense of that phrase  
 in the New Testament, and especially from  
 the coherence of these words with the forego-  
 ing and following verses, it appears that the  
*well doing* here spoken of, is to be understood  
 of *Works of Charity*. Which the *Apostle*, as  
 they were Christians, did suppose them to  
 practise, but being apprehensive lest the dis-  
 couragements they met with in the world,  
 should make them grow cold and remiss in  
 this great duty, he therefore exhorts them not  
 to faint or grow weary of doing it; and to that  
 end he lays down the most powerfull Motive  
 and Consideration; *for in due season ye shall reap*  
*if ye faint not: i. e. ye shall not miss of a reward*  
*from God.*

So that from the words we may take notice of these two things which deserve our consideration.

1. The many discouragements men meet with in the World which are apt to make them grow *weary in well doing*.

2. The mighty encouragement which God gives to our continuance and perseverance in it; *for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.*

I. The many discouragements men meet with in the World, which are apt to make them grow *weary in well doing*.

The Precepts of Charity deliver'd by our Saviour and his Apostles are so plain, so full, so many, so easie to be understood; and those Precepts inforced by so just, and reasonable, and pious considerations, with respect to God, to the World, to fellow Christians, to the honour of our Religion, and lastly to our selves, from the comfort that is in well doing, and the reward that follows it; that a man must have great impudence, to profess himself a Christian, and yet to think himself not obliged to doe acts of Charity. But notwithstanding all this, and much more which might be said to this purpose, there are too many still who are ready to find out some plausible pretences to excuse them from *well doing*; which

which being the greatest discouragements to men from continuing in it; I shall make it my present business to examin them, and to shew how little weight there is in them, especially being compared with the Authority of him who hath made this our duty, and the reward we may justly expect for performing it. And here I shall pass over the more common and trivial Objections, which every one can easily answer that makes them; and rather argue an unwilling mind to perform their duty, than one unsatisfied about the reasonableness of it; and I shall therefore insist on those that carry a greater appearance of strength in them; which are chiefly these two,

1. From the different *state* of our *Times* from those when these *Commands* of *Charity* were given.

2. From the sad prospect of our own Affairs, which seem rather to call for a *Care* of our selves than *Charity* to others.

1. The first pretence is from *the difference of Times*; "There was then, say such men, "great reason for Charity which will not hold "now; those were times of persecution for "Religion, and many were driven to great "streights and necessities on that account who "deserved to be relieved, and the Christians

“ had been worse than Infidels not to doe  
 “ good to men that were brought to want  
 “ meerly for Christ’s and the Gospel’s sake;  
 “ the Laws then could take no care of these  
 “ poor and indigent persons; for the Laws  
 “ made them so, being then opposite to Chri-  
 “ stianity : but now our Religion is settled by  
 “ the Laws; and we have many Laws made  
 “ for a competent provision for the poor,  
 “ which will be sufficient if they be put in ex-  
 “ ecution, and if they be not, what Charity is  
 “ this to relieve an idle and disorderly sort of  
 “ People who live upon Alms, when it is grea-  
 “ ter Charity to such to make them work and  
 “ to provide for their own subsistence ?

This is the force of the Objection which  
 seems to have a great deal of strength and  
 weight in it ; but before I give an Answer to  
 it I must acknowledge the truth of some things  
 contained therein.

(1.) That there is a great difference in the  
 case of Charity, where our Religion is settled  
 by Law, and where it is persecuted by it. For  
 a larger measure and degree of Charity is just-  
 ly required in a time of Persecution, in as  
 much as those are the truest Objects of Cha-  
 rity who prefer *the keeping Faith and a good*  
*Conscience* before the good things of this Life.  
 And we ought to look upon it as an unvalu-  
 able



able blessing, that we have the *Christian*, yea the *Reformed Christian Religion* settled by our *Laws*. And God grant it may ever so continue !

(2.) It cannot be denied that we have very good Laws for the maintenance of the Poor, and that they might be sufficient for their common necessities, if they were duly executed. And it is a very just and reasonable distinction which our Laws make between the involuntary Poor, who are made so by the hand of Heaven, either by Sicknes, or Lameness, or Age, or Children, or Fire, &c. and the voluntary Poor, who may help themselves but will not, being idle, dissolute and slothfull persons. These deserve rather the hand of Justice to punish them than that of Charity to relieve them : For Saint *Paul* himself is so far from thinking this to be true Charity, that he hardly thinks it so to keep such from starving if we take that Proverbial saying in its strict and literal sense, *If any would not work, neither should he eat.* 2<sup>d</sup> Thess. 3. 10.

(3.) I grant that it is greater Charity to put persons upon providing for themselves than to relieve their present necessities. For that is the greatest Charity which doth a man the most good. And he that reduceth a dissolute and wandring Beggar to the taking pains

pains for himself and Family cures an ill habit of his Mind; puts him into the way of Vertue and Sobriety; gives him a lasting stock for himself and Family (for diligence and industry is so) keeps him out of the danger of the worst sort of Company; gains him more Friends, who will be far more ready to help a person industrious in his Poverty than the most clamorous and importunate Beggar. And therefore our Laws have wisely determin'd, that Work-houses are the best Hospitals for the Poor, who are able to help themselves. But after these concessions, I am far from thinking the command of Charity to be swallowed up in our Laws for the relief of the Poor. For,

(1.) If our Laws were the best in the World for this purpose, yet, if they be not duly executed, they leave as much room for Charity as if there were none. What if a Law were made that there should be no Poor at all among us; but that immediate care should be taken, upon any man's falling into decay, that his Stock should be supplied out of the superfluities of the Rich? If this Law were not executed, men would be altogether as miserable in their Poverty, and as great Objects of Charity as if there were no such Law in being. For the making of a Law for their  
supply



supply without putting it in execution, is but like the Person in Saint James, *who said to those* Jam. 2. 16. *who were naked and destitute of daily food, be ye warmed and filled; but notwithstanding gave them nothing needfull for the Body; what doth this profit?* What advantage or satisfaction is it to a Man to starve with the Law on his side? Or can men be better fed or cloathed with the Words of a Law than of any particular Person? If not, then if care be not taken for the relief and maintenance of the Poor according to the Laws, there is as great need of Charity as if there were none at all.

(2.) If we suppose the Laws for relief of the Poor to be duly executed, yet there are many particular cases of Charity which often happen which the Laws cannot be supposed to provide for. The Law takes care onely of general, and notorious, and common cases; but there are continual Instances of singular and extraordinary cases where relief is as much wanted, but is rarely challenged. How often is some mens Reputation a snare to themselves and Families; who had rather sink silently into the gulf of Misery, than have their wants made known to their insulting neighbours, among whom they have lived in as good fashion as themselves? How many have been tempted rather to put an end to a miserable Life.

Life than to be despised and contemned for their Poverty in their old Age ! How many are unwilling to make known their condition for fear of a repulse and being thought Liars, or impudent and common Beggars ! How hardly will some pinch themselves and Families, before they will make known their necessities ! and some have been known to have brought themselves so low, that when their sad condition hath been discovered, they have been past all possibility of recovery. I hope such Instances are not frequent among us. And yet we are lately told in Print by a Member of this City, *That he hath reason to believe many hundreds have perished through want of late years.* If this be true, and their case was known ; what a shame and dishonour is it, in the midst of so much plenty and luxury, to suffer such a reproach to Christianity to be among us ? But if their case were not known in time ; the stain is not quite wiped off, because there ought to be in so great, so rich, so well-governed a City, a due care taken to find out as well as to relieve the truly necessitous.

(3.) The obligations of Charity reach much farther than the force of our Laws doth. For how small a matter within this City doth answer the letter of the Law, where Persons enjoy

enjoy very great and plentiful Estates? And is that all which their thankfulness to God, their love to their Brethren, and the regard to our Saviour's Commands will draw from them? Is this *being mercifull as our heavenly* Luk. 6.36. *Father is mercifull?* Is this *giving our Alms in* Matt. 6.4. *secret, that thy Father which seeth in secret may reward thee openly?* Is this *making to our selves* Luk. 16.9. *friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness?* Is 22. 21. *this being rich towards God; being rich in good* 2 Tim. 6. *works, being ready to distribute, willing to com-* 18. *municate?* Is this *doing good to all men as we* Gal. 6.10. *have opportunity?* Is this *feeding the hungry,* Matt. 25. *cloathing the naked, visiting the sick and impri-* 35, 36. *son'd?* Can we imagine that will be a good answer at the great day, that we have paid our Rates to the Poor? If the Christian Charity had extended no farther, *Julian* needed not have been so solicitous to have the Heathens equal them?

The true Charity of Christians is a free and voluntary thing, not what men are forced to doe by the Laws; It is a largeness of mind, that disposeth men to doe good to others, and embraceth every opportunity for that purpose; It is the flowing of a Fountain which runs freely, easily and constantly; and not like the pouring water out of a narrow mouthed Vessel, where but little comes, and with a great deal of noise.

Charity spreads it self like the beams of the Sun, and warms and enlivens the colder parts of the Earth; it pierceth into the bowels of it, and makes it self a passage to those secret and hidden objects which are out of the view of the World. True Christian Charity hath arms so large to comprehend the whole World within them; but it is the Life and Spirit of that Body whereof Christ is the Head; it passeth from one member to another, emptying it self from the larger vessels into the less, and so by a constant motion and course through the Body it keeps heat and union in all the Parts. To doe good because one cannot help it, is to obey the Law of Necessity and not of Charity. He that resolves to go no farther in Charity than the Law requires him, declares he would not have gone so far unless the Law had forced him; which is in effect to tell the World, he hath not so much as an inclination to Charity.

*Stat. de*  
 39 Eliz.  
*c. 5. &*  
 21 Jac.  
*c. 1.*  
 14 Car. 2.  
*c. 9.*  
 Co. 2. *In-*  
*stit.* 723.

(4.) Our Laws give great encouragement to the best, the noblest, the most lasting Works of Charity; such as erecting Work-houses for the Poor that are able to work, endowing Hospitals and Alms-houses for the impotent, distemper'd and aged Poor; setting up Free-Schools for the Education of Youth. And I never yet met with any Objection against these  
 that

that will not hold against the best designs in the World. For it is possible they may be abused, and may accidentally prove an occasion of Idleness to some Persons, and they may exceed the due proportion of Persons fit for them, (Although we yet see no great danger of that.) Yet what design can the wit of Man pitch upon in a captious and suspicious Age, that will not meet with Objections from those that have a mind to cavil? The best Religion in the World, the best Church, the best Government, the best Laws; the best Men cannot escape the censures of ill-minded Men; and why should we think the best designs of Charity should? But some men whose minds are set upon one particular way of Charity, are apt to disparage all other ways to advance their own: which is the common Errour of Mankind, to think sufficient Right is not done to the thing they admire, unless they undervalue all other things in comparison with it. But it is a part of Charity to allow, approve and incourage all true ways of Charity; not to set up bodily Labour against the improvement of the Mind; nor the learning of Arts and Sciences to the disparagement of breeding men up for Trade and Business; nor to cry down Hospitals and Infirmaries for the Lame and Sick and Aged in comparison of Work-

houses for the Young and Strong and Healthfull. For all these are excellent and most commendable ways of Charity, and have nothing of contradiction or inconsistency with one another, if they do answer the ends of their Institution. I do not go about to lessen the esteem of casual and occasional Acts of Charity done to particular Persons in present Want; when our Blessed Saviour in the midst of all his Poverty took care of the Poor, for when he spake to Judas at the Table, the Disciples supposed it was *that he should give something to the Poor*. What admirable Charity was this, when he had not whereon to lay his head, and was at the expence of a Miracle to give an entertainment to the People, yet he had an Officer, one of his own Apostles, to take care of the Poor! And when he pronounceth such Blessedness to those who doe acts of Charity to them, and accounts them *as done unto himself*; which is the highest expression of his gracious acceptance of such Acts from us, and of the great obligation that lies upon us to doe them; since we ought not to think much of any thing we doe for the honour of our Lord and Saviour, who did and suffer'd so much for our sakes: Yet when we compare these with the publick Works of Charity before mention'd, being done for the same

John 13.  
29.

Matt. 25.  
34. 40.



same end ; we shall find these to exceed the other in some material circumstances, which add much to the excellency of them.

(14) In the Largeness and Extensiveness of their design. Other Charities are for the present relief of some poor and indigent persons, whose bowels are refreshed, and backs are clothed, and hearts are eased, by the kindness of others to them ; but these are soon gone, and mens Charity cannot follow them beyond the Grave. But publick endowments of Charity are to last for ever, and doe good to the Poor of many Generations. The Ages to come will rise up and bless their Memory who took care to doe good to those whom they never saw ; and to provide for such, yea very many such, whom it was impossible for them to know. When a man sees a great object of Charity, as the Widow and Fatherless under extreme necessities, the Mother weeping and bemoaning her Children not having bread to put into their Mouths, and the poor Children looking ghastly and frightfully crying for want of bread, but not knowing where to get it, the very uneasiness of a man's own mind at the sense of so much misery in others, will extort some present relief to still their cries, and to put such an unpleasing Idea out of his Fancy. But if the Object is  
self

self do not move, yet importunity may : if that doth not, yet custom, reputation, natural humanity, recommendation of Friends may prevail on men to be sometimes liberal to persons whom they see under present Wants. But how much doth all this fall short of a fixed, certain, perpetual provision for the necessities of those, whom none of those Arguments could excite men to shew kindness to ? The other is a more sensible, natural, private Charity ; this is a more rational, generous Christian Charity ; being built upon more free, and noble, and lasting considerations, most agreeable to the design and honour of the Christian Religion, which puts men upon doing the best things and which tend to the greatest benefit and advantage of mankind. And in the comparison of things that are good, the largest, the most publick, the most lasting ought to have the preeminence.

(2.) In their Consequence and Usefulness ; which ought to be especially regarded in Acts of Charity. For true Charity must be accompanied with Wisdom and Discretion. It is not a man's profuse liberality to every one that asks ; nor making himself poor to make others rich ; it is not squandering away an Estate among idle and indigent Persons, that makes him a charitable man ; but it is a  
wise



wife dispensing the Gifts God hath bestowed upon him for the benefit and advantage of others. And the greater the Good is that is received the greater is the Charity in bestowing it. The Schoolmen reckon up seven sorts of Corporal Alms, and as many of Spiritual; *to visit the sick, to feed the hungry, to satisfy the thirsty, to cloath the naked, to redeem the captive, to entertain the stranger, to bury the dead*; are the former: *to teach the ignorant, to advise the doubtfull, to comfort the sorrowfull, to correct the wicked, to forgive the injurious, to bear the troublesome, to pray for all*; are the Instances of spiritual Charity. But this is rather a distribution of the different sorts of Charity, than any just Rule and Measure of our obligation to the Acts of it. For although in the general, spiritual Acts of Charity to mens Souls, are to be preferred before what refers onely to their Bodies; yet in particular cases a man may be more obliged to relieve their outward necessities than to give them good counsel for their Souls; *i. e.* when those necessities are urgent and pressing, and by a present supply they may have longer time and be in better disposition to receive spiritual Advice. Some dispute if a bad man be in greater want and a good man in less want, which of these two is to be preferred? And the Casuists say,

*Visito, poto, cibo, redimo, tego, colligo, condo. Consule, castiga, solare, remitte, fer, or 4. 2. 2. Q. 32. art. 2.*

*The*

Cajet. in  
2.2. Q. 32.  
art. 4.

*The Work of Mercy* is greater in the former Case; but *the Work of Charity* in the latter. For *Mercy* onely relates to another's misery; but *Charity* takes in other Considerations. So I say, when the competition lies between the present supply of some in great want, and making a lasting provision for more persons in less want, there may be more *Mercy* in the former case, but there may be greater *Charity* in the latter: because the more publick, the more common, the more usefull the Good is, the greater the *Charity* is in doing of it. I will not dispute, whether the breeding up of youth to Learning, or Labour, be among us the greater *Charity*? I know no reason why two such excellent ways of *Charity* should be set at variance with each other. But certainly we are not to judge of mens usefulness to the publick meerly by the strength of their limbs, or the hardness of their hands, or the nimbleness of their fingers. Is it not possible that by the charitable education of Children in the ways of Learning and Knowledge some may arrive at a greater capacity of serving God and their Country, than if they had been grinding in a Mill, or tugging at an Oar all that while? It is not onely keeping People to hard labour, or to continual working, which is the design of *Charity*; but the most excellent way  
of

of Charity is, to improve all Persons according to their several Capacities, so as to make them more usefull and serviceable to the Publick. This is not onely *doing Good* to the particular persons, but to the whole Nation; and *Charity* is not barely to be measured by the quality of its Acts, but by the largeness of the circumference it fills. The breeding up some few great and usefull Persons to a Nation is a Work of Charity the publick Good is more concerned in, than in the manual labours of many industrious Artificers: who do serve the Publick too in their way; but there is a difference between those lesser Stars in the Firmament, that wanted a Telescope to discover them, and those great and splendid Bodies which influence the Earth, and direct mens passage in the deep Waters. That is therefore the greatest and most usefull Charity, which tends to the improving mankind according to their different Capacities; some for Labour, others for Trade, others to be usefull to the rest of mankind with a respect either to their Country or to their Estates, their Bodies or their Souls: And which takes all possible care to prevent the unspeakable and innumerable mischiefs which idleness and debauchery do bring upon mankind,

(3.) In the Honour they bring to Religion.

E

There

There are some cases, wherein our Charity must be so secret, that *our left hand must not know what our right hand doth, i. e.* when there is danger of vanity and ostentation in the doing of our Alms; but when the honour of God and Religion is concerned, then *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good Works, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven.* But how can men see those Acts of Charity which are done in secret, and are industriously concealed from the knowledge of men? And if that were to be taken as a strict command in all cases, then all the publick Works of Charity, which are most considerable for the Honour of God and Religion would be forbidden by the Gospel. But where men do excellent and praise worthy things for great and good ends, without Pharisical Hypocrisie, it is the general concernment of Religion and the glory of God not to have such things kept from the knowledge of the World. *For herein, saith our Saviour, is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my Disciples.* So shall ye appear to be my Disciples, for Christ had owned them for his Disciples before, but this would manifest their being so to the World; which would bring the greatest honour to God and to the Christian Religion. And it is certain  
nothing

Matt. 6. 3.

Matt. 5.  
16.John 15.  
8.

nothing did more advance the reputation of it in the World, than their singular and extraordinary care of the Poor. For they not onely relieved in the first place those that were Christians, according to the Apostle's Rule in the next Verse ; *especially to those of the Household of Faith* ; but their Charity extended to the very Heathens : which *Julian* takes notice of with great Indignation : *Is it not a shame for us not to relieve our own poor, when the Christians not onely take care of their own but of ours too ?* Jul. Ep. ad Arfac. And by the case of *Lucian's Peregrinus*, it appears, that some pretended to be Christians on purpose that they might be partakers of the great bounty and kindness which the Christians shewed to their Brethren. But such Instances as these did not make *them weary in well-doing* ; but still as the Church increased in Riches by the free and large oblations of the People ; so greater care was taken for the erecting Hospitals for the reception of the Poor, who could provide no habitation for themselves ; and this was then always looked on as a particular concernment of Religion, and not as a meer political Constitution.

Thus the matters of Charity stood in the Christian Church, till men came to be perswaded that by the Priest's saying so many Prayers for the dead, their Souls might be re-

moved out of Purgatory and translated to Heaven. And when this notorious Cheat prevailed, the stream of mens Charity was diverted from the Poor, to the making good bargains for their Souls. And who could blame men who had spent all their days in Wickedness, or raised an Estate by Fraud and Oppression, if at their death they took care to leave enough to have so many Masses said for their Souls, as might by a reasonable computation serve for their Redemption out of Purgatory at a marketable Price. When the laying open these Cheats to the World, gave the first occasion to the Reformation, a mighty out-cry was every where made, that the Foundation of all good Works was destroyed, and if the Reformation prevailed there would be no want of Faith, when every one might choose what he pleased, but nothing like Charity was to be expected. To remove the former Calumny, our Reformers published the Articles of our Religion; and to take away the latter, they put that admirable Prince *Edward the Sixth* upon the new founding the famous *Hospitals* of this *City*, (for although there were some *Hospitals* before, such as *Saint Mary Bethlehem*, *Elsyng Spittal*, *Saint Bartholomew's*, yet they were inconsiderable in comparison of what they have been since) For by the care and



and Charity of the Governours and other Members of the City, they have yielded a wonderfull support to a mighty number of poor Children, and wounded and diseased Persons both in Body and Mind ; which being joyned with another *Foundation of one single Person*, this *City* may justly vye with any other in the Christian World as to so many and so great Foundations, for the best kind of Christian Charity, in the Education of Youth and the Care of the Impotent and Diseased.

Our Religion teacheth us better, than to have so vain and fond an opinion of our good Works as to think we *merit* Heaven by them ; but surely our Charity is so much the greater, if we doe these things out of a sense of Gratitude to God, than if we think to drive a bargain with him, and put our imperfect Works in the Ballance with an infinite and eternal Reward. Those of the Church of *Rome* may think they carry on a better Trade with Heaven than we doe ; and that they have a mighty advantage in the *overballance* of what they hope for in exchange for what they part with ; but they had best look well to the stating their Accounts, the due value of their Works, and the reason of expecting such a disproportionable return ; lest at last they deceive themselves, and totally fail of their expectati-

pections: For in the great day of Account,  
 all things will be most exactly weighed; and  
 although the greatest Benefactors rejoyce in  
 the highest Acts of *Kindness*, yet when any  
 thing is challenged in a way of *Justice*, men  
 do not love to be imposed upon or over-reach-  
 ed in a Bargain. What madness then is it,  
 for any sinfull Creatures to hope that any  
 Acts of theirs, being weighed by Divine Ju-  
 stice, can bear any proportion in a way of  
*Merit*, with no less than the Kingdom of  
 Heaven? This we utterly disclaim, and owe  
 all our hopes of Heaven meerly to the infinite  
 Goodness and Mercy of God through his Son  
 Christ Jesus: and yet we think our selves never  
 the less bound *to be fruitfull in good Works*; be-  
 cause we hereby testifie our obedience to the  
 Laws of Christ; our sincere love to God and  
 our Brethren; our readiness to doe good to  
 others by the mercies which God hath bestow-  
 ed upon us; our sense of the obligation we  
 have to one another, as partaking of the same  
 nature, and liable to the same infirmities, and  
 exposed to the same calamities; our expecta-  
 tion of a blessed reward, though not due to  
 the merit of our Works, but to the infinite  
 Grace and Mercy of God. And I do not see,  
 but where men have a due regard to God and  
 Religion, such considerations as these do more  
 effectually



effectually stir men up to true Acts of Charity, than those mercenary and corrupt Doctrines in the Roman Church; which look rather like cunning devices to pick the Peoples Pockets than any real Arguments for Charity. And upon a carefull examination, it hath been found, that our *Protestant Doctrine* was so far from stopping up the Channel that ran so freely before, that within sixty years after the *Reformation* more great and noble Works of Charity were done in founding of *Schools* and *Hospitals*, than for some hundreds of years before; and some say from the *Conquest* till that time of the *Reformation*. But this I have formerly insisted more upon, on the like Occasion.

The summe of what I have said is this, that we have no reason to be *weary in well-doing*; on the account of our Laws for the common relief of the Poor; because those Laws cannot provide for all cases of Charity; and because they do suppose the greatest Works of Charity to depend upon the largeness and freeness of those mens minds to whom God gives a heart to doe great and worthy things with the Estates he hath given to them.

2. But there is another plausible pretence yet behind, *viz.* from the consideration of our own Times. “ Were the times calm and  
“ fixed;

“ fixed ; had we a fair prospect of things be-  
 “ fore us, that were a great encouragement to  
 “ Charity ; but we live in perplexed and doubt-  
 “ full times, and know not what may become  
 “ of us all ; mens minds are strangely discom-  
 “ posed and full of Fears ; and therefore this  
 “ is a very unseasonable Time to perswade  
 “ them to Charity, when they ought rather to  
 “ lay up and secure something against an evil  
 “ day.

To which I answer,

1. What times were those the Primitive  
 Christians lived in, who so much abounded  
 in Charity ? Saint *Paul* tells us of himself and  
 1 Cor. 4. his Brethren, *they were hungry and thirsty, naked*  
 11, 12, 13. *and buffeted, having no certain dwelling-place ;*  
*labouring, working with their own hands, reviled,*  
*persecuted, defamed ;* and yet nothing rela-  
 ting to this World was so much their care  
 and concernment as providing for the Poor.  
 For when he went up to *Jerusalem*, and there  
 2 Gal. 9. conferred with *James, Cephas and John*, at his  
 10. departure they had nothing to desire of him  
 and *Barnabas*, but to remember the Poor, the  
 same which I also was forward to doe ; as Saint  
*Paul* relates it. And you may see how earnest  
 2 Cor. 8, 9. he was in it, by his dealing with the *Corinthi-*  
 ch. *ans*, when he perswades them to a liberal con-  
 tribution to the poor Christians in *Judea*,  
 who

who then suffer'd much either through Fa-  
mine or Persecution or both. Saint *Paul* had  
undertaken for the *Churches* of *Achaia*, (of  
which *Corinth*, being a populous and trading  
City, was the chief) but the *Collection* not  
being yet made among them, he sends some  
on purpose to *Corinth* to make all ready against  
his coming to them, and perswades them to  
great liberality in their giving: for which end  
he makes use of the most powerfull and pre-  
vailing arguments and great arts of insinua-  
tion. (1.) He sets before them the Example  
of the *Churches* of *Macedonia*; which is truly <sup>2 Cor. 8.</sup>  
a very extraordinary instance of Christian Cha- <sup>1,2,3,4,5.</sup>  
rity. They were under great trouble and deep  
poverty at that time themselves, yet under-  
standing by Saint *Paul* this occasion of more  
than ordinary Charity, they not onely strai-  
ned themselves even beyond their abilities, but  
did it with that cheerfulness and satisfaction  
of mind, that they intreated the *Apostle* to ac-  
cept of what they had given, and to under-  
take the managing of so good a Work. And  
Saint *Paul* seems to speak of it with a kind of  
transport, *Moreover, Brethren, we do you to wit  
of the Grace of God bestowed on the Churches of  
Macedonia; how that in a great trial of afflicti-  
on, the abundance of their joy and their deep po-  
verty abounded to the riches of their liberality;*  
F for

for to their power I bear record, yea and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministring to the Saints. Nothing can be added to the weight of these words and the *Emphasis* wherewith they are penned. (2.) He lets them know what a shame and reproach it would be to so famous a Church for other *Divine Gifts* to come behind others in Charity.

- 2 Cor. 8. 7. *Therefore as ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, (what artificial insinuations are these!) see that ye abound in this Grace also.* (3.) But lest he should seem to press too hard upon them, he draws off again; *I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.* (4.) Yet he hath no sooner said this, but he comes on again with the most prevailing Argument taken from the Example of our Blessed Saviour: *For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor that ye through his poverty might be rich. Can any thing be more moving to Christians than this?* (5.) His design was not to lay a burthen upon them, but to excite mutual compassion in Christians to one another. (6.) This would be a demonstration
- v. 8.
- v. 9.
- v. 13, 14.

stration to the World of their kindness to him, and that he had not spoken great things of them without cause. (7.) They might justly <sup>2 Cor. 8.</sup> expect a retribution suitable to their Bounty ; <sup>24.</sup>  
*But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall* <sup>9. 6.</sup>  
*reap sparingly ; but he which soweth bountifully*  
*shall reap also bountifully.* (8.) This would be  
the occasion of many thanksgivings and pray-  
ers to God for them. *For the administration of* <sup>v. 12.</sup>  
*this service, not onely supplieth the want of the*  
*Saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgi-*  
*vings unto God.* (Whilst by the experiment of <sup>13.</sup>  
*this ministration they glorifie God for your profes-*  
*sed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for*  
*your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all*  
*men.) And by their prayer for you, which long* <sup>14.</sup>  
*after you for the exceeding Grace of God in you.*  
*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.* <sup>15.</sup>  
Wherein he supposes the thing as already done,  
as believing it impossible for them to resist the  
force of so many Arguments. And yet all  
this while Saint Paul supposes their condition  
to be such as in a little time they might stand  
in need of relief from others ; which he thought  
was so far from being an Argument against  
present Charity, that he useth it the other way ;  
*that now at this time your abundance may be a* <sup>8. 14.</sup>  
*supply for their want, that their abundance may*  
*also be a supply for your want. i. e. Do not con-*

sider what times may come upon your selves so as to hinder *doing Good* while it is in your power to doe it ; leave those things to the wise Providence of God ; if he think fit to reduce you to want, he that now excites your hearts to doe good to them, will stir up others to make up the same measure to you. So that while the Christians were either under great persecutions, or in expectation of them, through the Power of the Magistrates, or the Rage of the People ; yet the *Apostles* pressed them, and that with great success, to a free, cheerfull, liberal contribution to relieve those who labour under greater wants than others.

2. This very consideration is used as an Argument in *Scripture* to perswade men to *Charity*, viz. That we do not know what times may come upon us. *Give thy portion to seven and also to eight ; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.* This seems to the men of this World a strange way of reasoning, and it may be they suspect from hence that *Solomon* was not so wise a man as they took him to be. “ What ! give away what one hath because one knows not what times may come. No certainly, say they, we ought to get what we can, and to save what we have, for that reason. The difference of reasoning in this case proceeds upon the  
different



different Principles on both sides. *Solomon* believed a Divine Providence and they do not. And he thought that would be particularly concerned for the good of those, whom no sad prospect of Affairs could discourage from well-doing according to their Ability and Opportunity.

II. And so I come to the Incouragement here given to patient continuance in *well-doing*; for, *in due season we shall reap if we faint not*. Wherein are three things considerable.

1. The certainty of a future recompence for well-doing. *We shall reap*.

2. The time of receiving it, not immediately, but *in due season*.

3. The condition supposed on our parts, which is continuance in well-doing. *If we faint not*. Some understand it as relating to the reward, that we shall receive it *without fainting*; reaping and harvest being a time of labour and sickness; but the more natural meaning of *μὴ ἐκλυόμενοι*, seems to be the taking the *participle*, as implying the *condition* on our parts.

1. The certainty of a future recompence for well-doing. *God is not unrighteous*, saith the *Heb. 6. 10.* Apostle, *to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name; in that*

ye

*ye have ministred to the Saints and do minister.* Though it be a *work and labour*, though it may seem uneasie and troublesome for a while ; yet being a *work and labour of love* ; it is but the *work and labour of sowing*, which a man goes through the more cheerfully because he expects a plentiful increase. He doth not reap presently the very same which he sowed, but a wonderfull improvement of it, when the *seed* being cast into a fruitfull soil brings forth *some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold*. And this Harvest doth not depend upon the uncertainty of the Weather ; here are no fears of blasting and mildew, or locust to prevent the joyfull expectation of it ; no danger of the seed rotting in the ground, or being pickt up by the fowls of the air ; but *he that minisreth seed to the sower, will multiply the seed sown, and increase the fruits of their righteousness*. His Word is engaged that they which *sow* shall *reap* a plentiful increase ; and therefore God will not be unrighteous in not performing his Promise. This men may as certainly depend upon as that Night and Day shall follow each other ; for *Heaven and Earth may pass away, but the Word of God endureth for ever*.

2 Cor. 9.  
10.

2. The time of this retribution, *in due season*. Most men are unwilling to trust God

too

too long upon his bare Word; they would have something in hand, and the remainder hereafter. And God by the course of his wise Providence, doth very often order things so in this World that the most charitable men, although they may not abound with the greatest riches, yet generally meet with the fewest difficulties; and in their straights find more unexpected assistance than other men. *David* made it the observation of his own time, that in all his days though he was then grown old, he never saw the righteous, i. e. the charitable Psal. 37. man, forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. And <sup>25.</sup> they have far more reason than other men to hope, that if they do fall into trouble and sickness, God will have a particular regard to them; and besides this, they have the natural or rather spiritual contentment that follows *doing Good*; and they have more satisfaction and ease in it, than others have in hoarding up Wealth for they know not whom. But none of all these are the reaping here mention'd; They are like *Ruth's* gleaning of Ruth 2. handfulls in the field of Boaz, which shewed a <sup>16.</sup> more than ordinary kindness; notwithstanding which he said, *The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.* v. 12. So it is here, they may have better glean-

Matt. 25.  
34, 35, 36.

v. 40.

gleanings and fuller handfulls sometimes in the common Field of Providence, but this is not the full recompence which the God of Mercy will give to those that trust in his Word. That is onely to be expected at the great Day when the Lord the righteous Judge shall say, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World. For I was an hungred and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger and ye took me in ; naked and ye clothed me ; I was sick and ye visited me ; I was in prison and ye came unto me : For inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my Brethren ye have done it unto me.* O the infinite Goodness and unexpressible Kindness of our Blessed Saviour, who in the day of Judgment will interpret all Acts of Charity so much to the advantage of those that doe them ! Who would deny any thing to a Servant of that Lord who takes all kindneses to them as done to himself, and rewards them accordingly ? What other apprehensions will covetous and hard-hearted Wretches then have of their fordid penuriousness in heaping up riches, without any tenderness or compassion to the necessities of their Brethren and Christ's Representatives ? How will they wish ten thousand times, when it will be to no purpose to wish, that

that they had rather laid out their money in *doing good*, than laid it up for those, who may go to Hell the faster for the great Temptations they leave behind them. Neither let the prodigal Fools think they shall escape better, for being so contrary to the griping and stingy humour of the Covetous ; for it is not the vain and careless squandering an Estate away in riotous courses will make a man's condition more tolerable at that day ; but it is the provident, seasonable, carefull distribution of our Charity for wise and good ends, which shall meet with so glorious a reward.

3. Especially, in the last place, *if we faint not*, and do not repent of what good we have done, but continue so doing to the end of our Lives. For this reason I presume it is that many reserve their greatest *Acts of Charity* to their Deaths ; but it is dangerous putting off their Repenting and doing Good till they come to die, for fear their hearts, or those whom they trust deceive them. But if men begin to doe well in their health and strength, let them *not faint* when they come to die ; but continue *charitable* as well as *faithfull unto death*, and God will give them a crown of life.

And now my business is to make particular *Application* to this great Assembly *not to be*

*weary in well-doing* ; and therefore I shall repeat to You, *A true Report, &c.*

You perceive by this Relation, how much Good hath been already done in the care of the Education of poor Children, and in the cure of and provision for the Maimed and Distracted, all which are very commendable ways of *well-doing*, and it is a great advantage to me this Day, that I am onely to perswade you *not to be weary in this well-doing, for in due season You shall reap if ye faint not*. You have already broke through many discouragements, and since the sad calamities of Plague and Fire, which made such desolations among us, You have done even as to these charitable Foundations, what hath been to the Admiration and Astonishment of beholders. Which of us all who saw the City in its Ruines, with so many Churches and Halls and Hospitals buried in its rubbish, could ever hope to have lived to see them rise again with a much greater Glory ; and our new-built Hospitals to appear with that Magnificence, that strangers may easily mistake them for Palaces ? We have lived in an Age that hath beheld strange Revolutions, astonishing Judgments, and wonderfull Deliverances ; what all the Fermentations that are still among us may end in, God alone knows ; our unanswerable returns to  
God



God for his great Mercies may justly make us fear, that he hath greater scourges provided for us; the best thing we can doe for our selves, is to amend our ways, and to bring forth fruits worthy of amendment of life; not barely to own and profess the *Protestant Religion*, but to adorn it, by holy and exemplary lives, and doing all the Good we can while we have opportunity. And to this end I shall offer these Considerations, and so conclude.

1. The more Good ye doe, the more Comfort you will find in the doing it. *Therefore be not weary in well-doing.* There is a certain secret pleasure and inward satisfaction that follows *doing Good*; which increases by exercise and continuance. This is so far above the pleasure of the Covetous and Voluptuous in pursuit of their ends, that it approaches nearest of any thing we can conceive, to the satisfaction of the Almighty, who delighteth in doing Good. It was a remarkable saying of our Saviour, which Saint *Paul* preserved, *It is more blessed to give than to receive.* Act. 20. How happy do the Poor think themselves, <sup>35</sup> when those who are Rich are bountifull to them! But the advantage is on your side; they are the receivers but you are the gainers. What you bestow on them *you lay up in store for your selves*: which will yield far greater

comfort when you come to die than having raised a vast Estate: for that is onely carrying a greater account into another World; but this is a great help to discharge it.

2. Doing Good is really one of the best parts of our Religion. *True Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the Widow and Fatherless in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World.* It is not giving a cold formal visit to the Widow and Fatherless that makes any part of Religion, but doing all the good we can to them, by advice and counsel, by supplying their wants and taking care of their affairs. No Duty takes in so much of the substance of Religion as true Charity. *It is the fulfilling of the Law; the end of the Commandment, i. e. of the Gospel; the bond of perfectness.* That, without which, all other pretence to Religion is but flattering of God and meer hypocrisie. For all our *Prayers and Praises* are but verbal acknowledgments; that which he hath put the trial of our love to himself upon, is our love to our Brethren. *For he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

3. Doing Good to others is taking the best care of our selves. We all seem very apprehensive of dangerous times, and very fearfull  
what

what may become of us ; the best course every wise and good man can take in difficult and uncertain times, is to doe his own duty and to leave events to God. And there is no duty more unquestionable, more safe, more advantageous, to himself as well as to others, than *to doe good : i. e. to be kind and obliging to all, to forgive injuries, to reconcile enemies, to redeem captives, to visit the distressed, and according to our abilities and opportunities to relieve those that are in wants and necessities.* This is the way *to dwell safely, and to be quiet from the fear of evil ;* for as long as God governs the World he will take care of those who commit themselves to him by *patient continuance in well-doing.*

4. Doing Good doth the most answer the obligations God hath laid upon you by the Mercies he hath vouchsafed to you.

And now give me leave to plead with you the *Cause of the Poor and Fatherless Children, the Cause of the Wounded and Maimed, who cannot help themselves, the Cause of those who deserve so much more pity because they cannot pity themselves, being deprived of the use of their Understandings.* If God hath provided well for you and for your Children, wherein can you better express your thankfulness for such a mercy than by your kindness and charity

rity to those who are destitute of the means to make them Men. If you have reason to bless God for your good *Education*, shew it by taking care of theirs who may hereafter bless God for your kindness to them. If God hath blessed you with Riches and a plentiful Estate in this *City*, and raised you beyond your hopes and expectations, what can you do more becoming the *Members* of this *City* than to be kind to the *Children* of those who have been such and reduced to *Poverty*? Remember from what God hath raised you; do not think much to consider what you have been, as well as what you are. You can never take the just height of God's Mercies to you unless you begin at the bottom; and let others measure your height now, as some have done that of the *Pyramid's*, by the length of your shadow, by the refreshments they find under you. Think what God hath brought you to, and for what end; Was it for your own sakes, that you might be full, while others are empty; that you might swim in abundance, while others are pinched with necessities? Was it not rather to make you his *Conduit-Pipes* to convey blessings and comforts to others through your means? When you are in health and at ease, then think of the miserable condition of those who lie in *Hospitals*  
under

under aches and pains and sores, having nothing to comfort them, but the Charity of good People to them. They cannot represent their own condition to you, being unable to come abroad to do it. Be you good *Samaritans* to the wounded and hurt, bind up their wounds with your kindness, and help to defray the charges of their cures. This is *loving our neighbour as our selves*, and that is *fulfilling the Law*, and the *great design of the Gospel*. Lastly, when you think what a blessing it is that you do enjoy the use of your *Reason and Understanding*, pity the poor Creatures whom God hath deprived of it. How easily, how justly, how suddenly may God cast you into their Condition? Shew the esteem that you have of this Mercy of God to your selves, by the freeness of your Charity to those that want it. Therefore, I conclude in the *Words* of the Text, *Let us not be weary in any of these ways of well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.*

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F I N I S.